



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Jean-Phillipe Barros
Chairman, House Committee on Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2020 - Department of Corrections FY 2021 Budget Proposals

Dear Chairman Barros:

I write in strong support of the criminal justice reform package that is included in the Department of Correction's budget and my broader Fiscal Year 2021 proposal.

We understood the critical importance of these reforms before the COVID-19 pandemic hit our state. But these past few months have highlighted the inequities that persist—both across the country and here in Rhode Island—and the urgency with which we must act. The reality is that people of color have long been overrepresented in our criminal justice system but excluded from economic opportunity. To make meaningful progress towards equity, we have to address both of these issues.

During my first term, we worked together to pass a package of Justice Reinvestment initiatives that improved our criminal justice system by modernizing probation and parole, establishing a Superior Court Diversion program, and other important reforms. At the start of my second term, I established the Criminal Justice Working Group to continue that important work. The Working Group recommended several of the proposals to help incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reenter society that are included in my budget proposal.

These initiatives include smart investments that will better support Rhode Islanders while they are incarcerated, but also support their transition back to the community. These include expanding Real Jobs RI behind the prison walls and building a successful DLT-DOC partnership to expand access to post-release employment, moving discharge planning in-house, expanding the medical parole statute to include geriatric parole, adjusting the work release fee structure to encourage participation, closing modules at the prison, and investing in preventive care.

We know that these reforms will not fix generations of systemic racism, but they will make a measurable difference in the lives of people who have been impacted by these inequities. My criminal justice reform package will reduce recidivism, drive down the future cost of corrections, improve public safety, and support our state's economic growth.

I look forward to working with you to ensure passage of these reforms.

Chairman Barros

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Sincerely,



Gina M. Raimondo

Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
Danica A. Iacoi, Esq.